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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa"

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 3, 17 and 19 of the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa", the General Assembly would:

> "3. Note that the Conference of the Parties has decided to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to host the Convention secretariat at Bonn, and expresses its appreciation for the support offered by the future host Government with respect to the relocation and effective functioning of the Convention secretariat;
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> ...

"17. Decide to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1998-1999 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for that biennium, taking into account the request of the Conference of the Parties;

...

"19. Welcome with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Senegal to host the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998."

2. For the biennium 1998-1999, it is envisaged that the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies would hold one two-week session (10 working days) each year. Interpretation services would be required in all six official languages. There would be four meetings daily (two simultaneous meetings in the morning and two in the afternoon) for a total of 40 meetings per year or 80 meetings for the biennium.

3. The documentation requirements estimated by the Convention secretariat would amount to 600 pages a year comprising 39 documents to be processed in all six official languages.

4. The second session of the Conference of the Parties would be convened from 30 November to 11 December 1998 at Dakar. It is understood that the Government of Senegal would host the meeting in accordance with section I, paragraph 5, of Assembly resolution 40/243. For costing purposes, it is to be assumed that the second session would have been held in Geneva.

5. With regard to the third session of the Conference of the Parties in 1999, it is anticipated that the meeting would be held at Bonn, the headquarters of the Convention secretariat. The additional requirements relating to the holding of meetings at Bonn would include the cost of travel and daily subsistence allowance of interpreters and supervisory staff from Geneva plus the recruitment of local staff for various services that would have been absorbed if the meeting were held in Geneva.

6. It should also be noted that for meetings at Bonn, it is anticipated that in-session documentation would be processed by remote translation and text-processing. While there would be no additional travel costs for translators and related staff, documents control staff would be required both in Geneva and Bonn to process the documents. Provision should also be made for other miscellaneous costs such as freight and communications.

7. For meetings at Bonn, it is to be assumed that the Convention secretariat would provide, with the assistance of the host Government, the necessary conference facilities, including those relating to interpretation and remote translation and reproduction of documents.

8. The conference-servicing requirements for the biennium 1998-1999 of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies are estimated at $1,906,700 at full cost.

9. In the absence of a specific decision of the General Assembly regarding meetings services to be provided to the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, no provision for such services was made in the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999. The extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998-1999. However, provision is made under section 27E, Conference Services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years.

10. Consequently, should the General Assembly decide to adopt the draft resolution, no additional appropriations under section 27E would be required in the 1998-1999 programme budget.